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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/918,117	07/30/2001	Akira Tsubouchi	18733/00060	2600

24731 7590 10/20/2003

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EXAMINER

VAN PELT, BRADLEY J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3682

DATE MAILED: 10/20/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/918,117

Applicant(s)

TSUBOUCHI ET AL.

Examiner

Bradley J Van Pelt

Art Unit

3682

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 8/18/03.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 4,5,9,11,13 and 14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 4,5,9,11 and 14 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Terminal Disclaimer

1. The terminal disclaimer filed on August 18, 2003 disclaiming the terminal portion of any patent granted on this application which would extend beyond the expiration date of Patent No. 6,442,992 has been reviewed and is accepted. The terminal disclaimer has been recorded.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oya (JP 11-278287) in view of Urschel (USPN 1,983,584).

Oya discloses a hollow rack shaft (fig. A), which is formed by bending a plate so that the two sides of the plate are joined and in a part of the surface of which a row of rack teeth along a direction of the axis is formed.

Oya does not disclose that the rack shaft is provided with a first area and second areas on both sides of it, and in said two second areas, a complete cylindrical part is formed and at least one of the second areas has a diameter different from the diameter of the semi-cylindrical part in said first area, the diameter of at least one of said second areas is smaller than the diameter of said first area.

Urschel renders obvious a hollow shaft in (fig. 20) that is provided with a first area (88) and a second areas (4,40) on both sides of it; and in said two second areas, a complete cylindrical

part is formed and at least one of the second areas has a diameter different from the diameter of the cylindrical part in said first area.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the apparatus of Oya to alter the areas of the rack shaft for the purpose of reducing the mass of the shaft.

Regarding claim 13, applicant is reminded that although the product by process claim is permissible the process in which the product is made cannot be given patentable weight in a product claim. Therefore, since the limitation of "formed cylindrically by bending a substantially rectangular plate so that the two parallel sides are joined" is not given patentable weight, the rack of that of Oya is deemed fully to meet the instantly claimed invention. In other words, the determination of patentability in a product-by-process claim is based on the product itself, even though the claim may be limited and defined by the process. The product or article in such a claim is unpatentable if it is the same as or obvious from the product of the prior art, even if the prior product or article was made by a different process. See *In re Thorpe*, 777 F.2d 695, 697, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed August 18, 2003 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues that the rejection of claim 13 over Oya in view of Urschel under U.S.C. § 103(a) is not proper. Specifically, even if Oya and Urschel are combined, the combined teaching would not suggest the limitations of claim 13. Also applicant states the Oya reference does not show differing diameter portions of the semi-cylindrical portion and the neighboring cylindrical portion, and that the Urschel reference does not show a semi-cylindrical portion.

In response to applicant's argument to both the (1) Oya reference does not show differing diameter portions of the semi-cylindrical portion and the neighboring cylindrical portion, and (2) that the Urschel reference does not show a semi-cylindrical portion, the test for obviousness is not whether the features of a secondary reference may be bodily incorporated into the structure of the primary reference; nor is it that *the claimed invention must be expressly suggested in any one or all of the references*. Rather, the test is what the combined teachings of the references would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981).

Conclusion

5. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

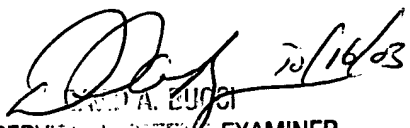
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Bradley J Van Pelt whose telephone number is 703.305.8176. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7:00-4:30, 2nd F 7:00-3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David A Bucci can be reached on 703.308.3668. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703.308.2168.

BJVP


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